

## **PSC RULES ON SOUTHWESTERN BELL TRIMS PROPOSAL**

Jefferson City (October 2, 1998)---The Missouri Public Service Commission has rejected a tariff filed by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (SWBT) stating that although the Telecommunications Revenue Interactive Management System (TRIMS) proposal generally offers benefits in controlling the telephone company's uncollectibles and helping customers manage their toll bills, the proposal as filed is not just, reasonable and in the public interest.

On August 14, 1997, SWBT filed a proposed tariff with the Missouri Public Service Commission seeking Commission authority to implement TRIMS.

According to the Company, TRIMS is an automated system designed to assist residential customers in avoiding disconnection for unpaid toll charges while providing continued and uninterrupted access to local service. Under SWBT's proposal, when TRIMS-monitored customers approached \$200 in toll charges, they would receive a recorded message advising them of the toll limitation and that their toll use would be automatically restricted once the limitation is exceeded.

SWBT stated the TRIMS proposal was developed as a collection tool designed to manage the problem of rising uncollectible revenues.

The Commission noted in its order rejecting the TRIMS proposal that the Commission would be receptive to reconsidering a revised TRIMS proposal which resolves the problems addressed in the Commission's order. The Commission stated: "Those problems would include specifying that TRIMS will not be applied in exchanges without 911 emergency service, fuller information in the initial customer letter, and assured access to operator services and local directory assistance."

According to SWBT's TRIMS tariff, a customer whose toll usage is restricted will not be able to complete calls preceded by a "1" or a "0". Customers who are toll-restricted will not be able to reach directory assistance or operator services because those services must be accessed by dialing a "1" or a "0".

(More)

The Commission stated in its order: “The Commission finds that SWBT should not be allowed to block toll-restricted customers from operator services and local directory assistance. SWBT’s witnesses could not assure the Commission that restricted customers would have access to alternative means of reaching these services using 800/888 dialing. SWBT should redesign its TRIMS tariff, ensuring that customers have appropriate access to operator services and local directory assistance.”

The Commission’s vote was 5-0.

---0---

Case No. TT-98-97